

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 CU-04 IO-13 DHA-02 MCT-01 ORM-02 AID-05 OMB-01
/105 W

-----091712Z 112071 /44

P 091325Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9438

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USUN NEW YORK 396

UNCLAS GABORONE 0354

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O11652 N/A

TAGS PFOR, SREF, BC, RH

SUBJECT 51 STUDENTS RETURN TO RHODESIA

REF GABORONE 319

1. A GROUP OF ABOUT 100-125 RHODESIAN PARENTS MET WITH THEIR
CHILDREN IN FRANCISTOWN ON FEBRUARY 6 TO ASCERTAIN

FOR THEMSELVES HOW THE 384 STUDENTS HAD COME TO BOTSWANA. MEETING
ALSO ATTENDED BY CHARLES TIBONE, ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY TO THE
PRESIDENT, NICHOLAS DE ROUGEMONT OF INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
(BASED IN SALISBURY,) CANON BURGESS CARR OF ALL-AFRICA COUNCIL
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OF CHURCHES AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION HEAD OF CHANCERY. MUCH
TO PARENTS DISMAY ONLY 51 CHILDREN AGREED TO RETURN TO
RHODESIA. ONE PARENT CLAIMED HIS CHILDREN HAD TOLD HIM THEY
HAD BEEN ABDUCTED AT GUNPOINT. HE WAS ALLOWED TO TAKE THEM WITH
HIM. MOST OF REMAINDER DECLARED THEY WANTED TO JOIN FREEDOM
FIGHTERS.

2. ACCORDING TO BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS, PARENTS WERE RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF WHO FINANCED TRIP TO BOTSWANA. HOWEVER, TRIP CLEARLY ORGANISED BY SMITH REGIME. SHORT- VALIDITY PASSPORTS WERE ISSUED IN ONE DAY (CANON CARR CLAIMED THAT PASSPORT APPLICATIONS OF BLACK RHODESIANS USUALLY TAKE 6-14 MONTHS TO BE PROCESSED) AND SEVEN BUSES PROVIDED (THREE FOR PARENTS AND FOUR FOR EXPECTED RETURNEES).

3. FEB 9 8 DAILY NEWS ALMOST COMPLETELY DEVOTED TO THIS IMPORTANT (FOR BOTSWANA) NEWS EVENT. CENTRAL FEATURE IS EDITORIAL CALLING INCIDENT A DIPLOMATIC VICTORY FOR BOTSWANA OVER SMITH. ACCORDING TO EDITORIAL. INTERNATIONAL PRESS SAW BIG LIE (THAT CHILDREN HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED) MELT AWAY WHEN CHILDREN (A) DECLARED THAT THEY WANT TO JOIN GUERRILLAS AND (B) TURNED BACKS ON PARENTS INTENT ON DELIVERING THEM INTO SMITH'S ITCHING HANDS. THRUST OF EDITORIAL IS THAT LIBERATION STRUGGLE HAS BECOME BUSINESS OF THE CHILDREN OF SOWETO, MANAMA AND W ELSEWHERE. CHILDREN WILL DENOUNCE PARENTS WHO SIDE WITH SMITH.

4. COMMENT BY SEPTEL
NORLAND

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NNN

Message Attributes

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